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METRO WILL RETURN TO NEWSSTANDS JAN. 3

YOU GAME?
BOLD SPORTS PREDICTIONS FOR COMING YEARS
{page 17}

LONDON metro®
Monday, December 26, 2011
www.metronews.ca
News worth sharing.

2012 If it's your last year on Earth, how will you live it?

@BlackCatCont: Finally found the man to spend my life with so I am gonna Marry him!!

@kelseyhip: Live to the fullest and on Dec. 31 dance around in my Christmas onesie, drinking red wine & waiting for the fireworks to begin

@nadiaadelle: I would spend as much time as possible with family and friends! And travel as often as I could!

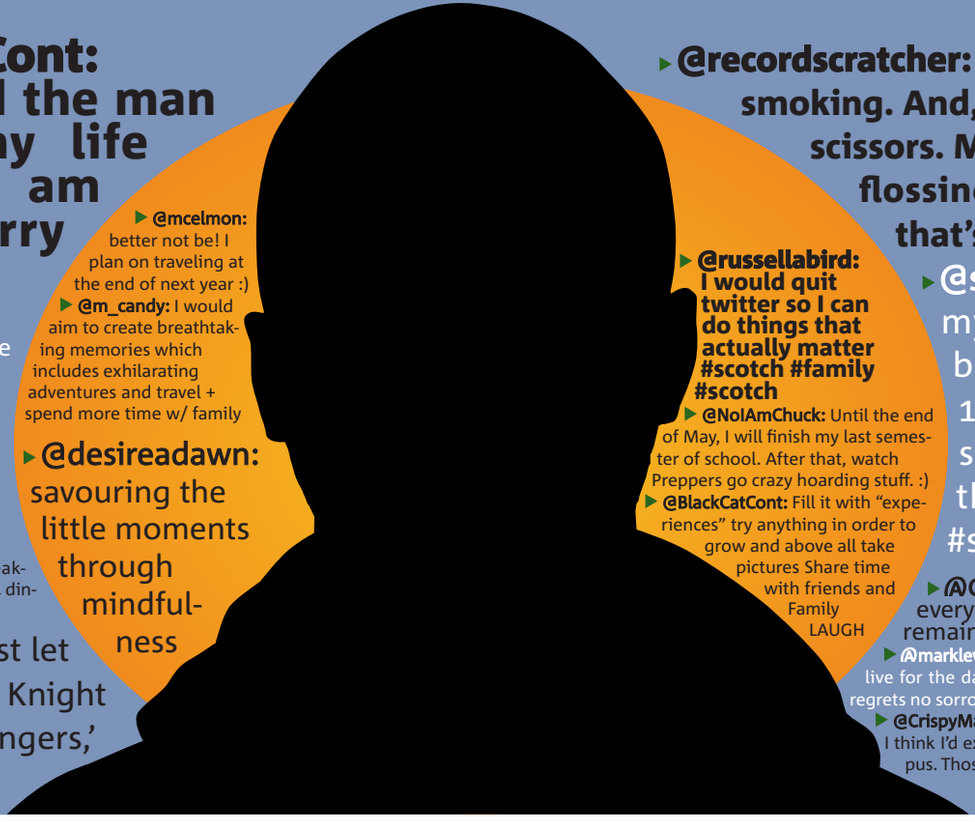
@gldngrl403: omelette 4 breakfasts/burgers 4 lunches/indian food 4 dinners

@henteko_mai: Just let me watch 'The Dark Knight Rises' and 'The Avengers,' then I'd be ok. :)

@mcelmon: better not be! I plan on traveling at the end of next year :)

@m_candy: I would aim to create breathtaking memories which includes exhilarating adventures and travel + spend more time w/ family

@desireadawn: savouring the little moments through mindfulness



@recordscratcher: I think I'll start smoking. And, running with scissors. Maybe even start flossing my teeth, but, that's a lot to ask.

@russellabird: I would quit twitter so I can do things that actually matter #scotch #family #scotch

@NoIAmChuck: Until the end of May, I will finish my last semester of school. After that, watch Preppers go crazy hoarding stuff. :)

@BlackCatCont: Fill it with "experiences" try anything in order to grow and above all take pictures Share time with friends and Family LAUGH

@seanydoyle: I blew my "end of days" budget back in 1999. My Netscape stock is still good though, right? #solidplan

@CitizenWilliams: I would sell everything I own and live out my remaining days in Guam.

@marklewis2009: No different than I do today, live for the day, live for love and live for life, no regrets no sorrow and no stress

@CrispyMario: if 2012 was my last year to live I think I'd explore the ocean and catch an octopus. Those things are super smart. #KnowItAll

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End of the world, or a new era?

With just under a year to go to Dec. 21, 2012, experts say there's no reason to fear the end is nigh ◐ Mayan calendar doesn't mark the apocalypse, they say, but rather the end of a more than 5,000-year era

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS
@METRONEWS.CA
METRO CANADA IN VANCOUVER

Doomsday is doomed.

So say experts, who want to dispel a widespread belief that the ancient Mayans predicted Dec. 21, 2012 to be the last day for all humankind.

Jaymie Matthews, an astronomer and astrophysicist at the University of B.C., said the date simply marks the end of a 5,126-year era in the "long count" Mayan calendar.

This calendar system records how many days have passed since Aug. 11, 3114 BC, the day believed to be the date of creation.

But the Mayans weren't warning future generations about an impending gloom and doom just because they didn't make any physical records of their calendar that went past the first long count, Matthews points out.

"Why would you ever make a calendar that starts on the second long count, which won't start for a couple thousand years after you were dead and buried?" he asks.

Matthews says it would take a Mayan astronomer at least 10 months to carve a calendar pattern on a huge piece of stone.

"There wasn't a point in making and going through the effort of making a calendar that would cover the second long count and would absolutely be of no use to anybody because nobody was going to be alive."

Justin Jennings, lead curator of the exhibition Maya: Secrets of their Ancient World at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, agrees that the Mayan calendar doesn't predict the end of the world but a transition into a new era.

"For the Maya, the idea was a cycle of time would end in December, but the next day a new cycle would begin," he says.

"(It's like) when you throw out your old calendar, it doesn't mean the world ends. You get a new one."

Matthews says if anything bad happens to the world, it's not going to be due to anything the Mayans foresaw.

"If something happens to the world on Dec. 21, 2012, it would be something we would do ourselves," he says.

There isn't the slightest reason to be worried, Matthews adds.

He says Dec. 21, 2012 would have been the super party of all time for the Mayans.

The source of the frenzy: The Mayan calendar

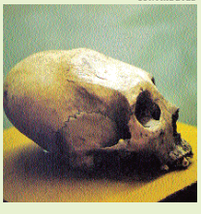
ISTOCK ILLUSTRATION

Mayan secrets revealed

Justin Jennings, lead curator of the exhibition Maya: Secrets of their Ancient World at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, tells Metro why the Maya civilization is one of the most impressive in human history and sheds light on some of the most widespread myths about the ancient Maya.

PHYLICIA TORREVILLAS

CONTRIBUTED



BEAUTY

Ancient Mayans went to extreme lengths to transform their bodies through tattooing, face painting and body piercing. They did cranial modification in which they wrapped up and tied boards to the heads of newborn babies to reshape the skull. They also filed their teeth.

CONTRIBUTED

CHOCOLATE

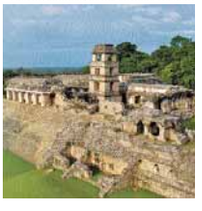
The cacao plant is from the part of the world where the Mayans lived — Mexico and parts of South America. The nobles drank a mix of chocolate, corn and water, sometimes with chili. Instead of a sweet drink, it would be bitter, spicy and foamy, like a cappuccino.

JORGE PEREZ DE LARA/ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

BLOODLETTING

Piercing the skin and allowing the blood to flow was done to communicate with gods and ancestors. Mayans would prick the skin with a stingray spine, bone or rock and collect the blood in a pot with cotton cloth and burn it. A vision serpent is said to appear in the flames.

JUSTIN JENNINGS/ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM



MISCONCEPTIONS

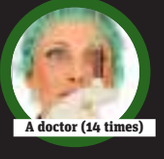
Maya culture is not dead. There are 10 million Mayan people today, although many of their city-states and the idea of the sacred rulers died out; Maya was not an empire. It was never unified by a single governing body, but made up of independent city-states with a common culture.

1 news

Metro asked

If the world were ending, and we needed the best and brightest so humanity could survive, who would you save? Out of the 412 panelists who answered, here are the three most popular picks:

U.S. President Barack Obama (17 times)



A doctor (14 times)

The Dalai Lama (12 times)

Honourable mentions:

Me (12), Oprah Winfrey (9), Stephen Hawking (8), Dog (7), Farmer (7), George Clooney for procreation (1)

Panel

Register at metropolitanpanel.ca

If the end is near, find friends and beer?

Metro asked five Londoners where they would go in the Forest City to survive End-of-Days

Kelsey Johnson, Miss Teen London-World 2011

"If the apocalypse were to take place, you would probably find me helping out at one of the local hospitals in our city. London is very fortunate to have the health-care system that it does and it is important that we continue to support it. ... There is no doubt that the staff would need extra hands in caring for these patients given a state of crisis."

Michael Houser Goalie, London Knights

"Either my billet house or here in the locker-room. I'd probably see what some of the guys are doing, hook up with them and see what was going on if the world was ending. I'd probably want to spend the last couple of minutes with them, I guess. We're together every other day, so why not be together that day, too?

Julie Bell public relations co-ordinator, the Grand Theatre

"Razzle Dazzle Cupcakes! They have plenty of sharp utensils and an oven — perfect for zombie combat and disposal — and their delicious cupcakes would give me the energy and happiness needed to survive."

Michael Ray Richardson coach, London Lightning

"I would choose my condo so I have peace and quiet. Once I come in and lock the door, I'm the only one that has a key."

Andrew Schiestel senior partner, tbk Creative

"I have two eight-pound Yorkie Poos who are balls of love. For our end of days, I'd spend it with friends and family with a precious pilsner in one hand and my two dogs in the other."

Epic travel and sex with strangers ... now guilt-free!

Travel seems to be the No. 1 item on most people's bucket lists, according to a Metropolitan Panel survey.

Of the 361 respondents, 98 said they would like to go on one last epic trip before time runs out.

"See the seven or eight Wonders of the World, and go visit the country where I was born," one panellist responded.

"Spend all my savings on a super vacation," another said.

Some were very specific. One wants to ride a Harley motorcycle across the Confederation Bridge, while another wants to go to the Playboy Mansion.

Which brings us to "more sex" — another popular answer.

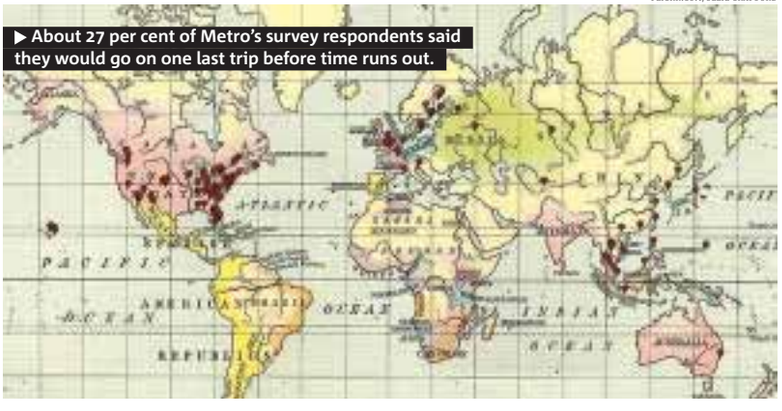
And in the case of one panellist, not just any sex will do. It'll have to be "kinky sexual relations." Of note, "sex with a stranger" made the list five times.

And while a lot of people want to try scuba diving and sky diving at least once, many respondents said it doesn't matter how they spend their last year on Earth as long as it's with family.

FERNANDO CARNEIRO

To join the panel, visit metropolitanpanel.ca

FLICKR.COM/OLLIE CRAFOORD



▶ About 27 per cent of Metro's survey respondents said they would go on one last trip before time runs out.

Cats and dogs

Random bucket-list items from the Metropolitan Panel survey:

- **Eat a meaty pizza.** "I'm a vegetarian. If I'm going, I might as well take a bunch of animals with me."
- **Meet an alien.**
- **Find my dog that was taken away from me.**
- **Go to an opera, in full formal, with my husband.**
- **Spend plenty of time with my cat.**

It was the best of times — for some of us

When it comes to the best day in our lives, it's the people around us who make it special, according to Metropolitan Panel members.

More than 200 respondents credited loved ones for their most special memories.

"The day I married my best friend, my husband," one panelist said.

"The day I met my wife, by happy accident. We met at a convention where we had both planned to leave early. I asked her for coffee and she said, 'No, thanks. I've had enough coffee today.' But, I persevered and asked her to go for dinner the next day."

The birth of children figured prominently.

"The two days my children were born," one said.

"The day my son was born. Nothing else comes close to that day," another added.

Some respondents were more into dogs.

"Getting my dog … she loves me no matter what," one person said.

Only two of the 390 respondents mentioned cats.

Secret deeds were behind a lot of memories, too.

"My last girls' night ... We did things our husbands shouldn't know or see," one person said.

"I went to an amusement park with the person I'm secretly in love with," another said.

Some responses were just sad.

"Birth. Everything has been downhill since then."

Another said, "Don't have one. Something always mucks it up. But that's life." FERNANDO CARNEIRO

Tom Cruise did it too

Best random response to the Metropolitan Panel survey:

- The best day is the one when I decided to go for braces at the age of 57.

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The new year, by the numbers

The world we know now will be changed forever, and numerology predicts 2012 will make it a better place

What is numerology?
Numbers have relationships with all things in nature, making them powerful symbolic expressions. Numerology is used to predict life, and the circumstances that surround it. It is often used to interpret a person's talents, traits and overall character throughout their destiny.

When one begins to understand the formula used behind numerology, they begin to unlock the deepest secrets in their life and quite possibly in the lives of others.

2012: 5 positives

1. Taking the initiative to create friendships
2. Love connections
3. Reconciliation
4. Mental/emotional balance
5. Expression of self

2012: 5 negatives

1. Challenges
2. Overreacting
3. Heightened sensitivity
4. Self-centredness
5. Controlling

Breaking down the digits
One important thing to remember when using numerology is that the numerical digits need to be broken down to a single digit in order to decipher the predictable outcome of what you are seeking.

For example, take the year 2012. Broken down it equals 2+0+1+2 = 5.

So, the influence for the year 2012 will be based upon the expression of the number five.

The power of five
Five itself has a powerful meaning — full of wild primitive adventure and unexpected exciting events.

The number five influence enhances freewill and self-expression. This means that during 2012, individuals will be living life their way. People who have been putting off projects, important decisions, loved ones or even a vacation will now make the time to accomplish the things that are overdue.

While seeking their highest goals and chasing their dearest dreams, as they bounce from one unique experience to the next, during 2012 most people will freely share their emotions and thoughts with the world. With this number-five influence, many people in the world will desire to use social outlets, ultimately as a tool to connect with the world.

Money-wise
Folks will take finances to a more serious level, and although they may not save as much money as they would like to, eventually their spending habits will change, and wiser choices will be made regarding their budget. People will start to get stingy with their cash, spending on only the best deal ... but the competition will be good for business and the consumer will benefit.

Lessons to be learned
Yes, the year 2012 will be somewhat unpredictable with all the frequent changes that five imposes, but 2012 will be a memorable year, packed with valuable lessons which people will learn to live by.

The world is not ending, but it is becoming a better place.

CERISE FAIRFAX (NUMEROLOGIST)

Mexican city starts countdown to 'doomsday'

A city in southern Mexico wants to live each moment as if it were the last.

Tourism officials in Tapachula have installed a digital clock to count down the time left before the Dec. 21, 2012 solstice, when some believe the world will end.

The clock was set to start Dec. 21, a year before the supposed apocalypse.

Chiapas state tourism regional director Manolo Alfonso Pinot said Dec. 16 that Mayan priests would perform a ceremony at the nearby archaeological site of Izapa.

Maya experts say the doomsday fears are a misreading of Maya stone inscriptions that mention the date, saying the Mayans only considered it the end of one calendar cycle and the beginning of another.

Pinot said he doesn't believe the world will end, but looks at it as a sort of beginning, in the business sense at least.

"A lot of people know they can fill their body with energy if they come to these exceptional sites," he said. "If people are interested, we have to take advantage of this."

Tapachula, best known as a gritty border town crossed by Central American migrants en route to the United States, is not a popular Mayan tourism destination. But nearby Izapa is a place where many stelae have been found, including the "Tree of Life" stone discovered in the 1950s and thought to convey an ancient Mayan tale.

CHARLES DHARAPAK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Former U.S. president George W. Bush, centre, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, right, and former Mexican president Vicente Fox walk along the Kukulcan Pyramid as they tour Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza in this 2006 file photo. Another Mexican town is hoping to draw tourists with a clock counting down to the end of the Mayan calendar.

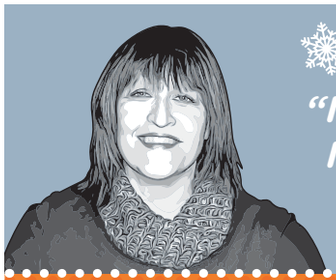
At Izapa, close to the Tajumulco volcano, Pinot says a Mesoamerican ball court, a carved stone and the throne of the Izapa ruler face a straight line that on Dec. 21, 2012 is expected to align with the planets.

"It is hard to say what you will be able to see that day," he said.

The doomsday theories stem from a pair of tablets that describe the return of a Mayan god at the end of a 13th period of 400 years, which falls on Dec. 21, 2012.

Experts say the date marks the end of a 5,126-year cycle that began in 3113 BC, and the start of another.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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NEVER MIND THE ZOTZ, FOLKS: THIS IS NOT THE END

PAUL SULLIVAN
METRO

Another year, another year-end story. Yawn.

However: If you believe hundreds of books and 1,000-plus websites and blogs this will be the last year-end ever. Nothing boring about that.

The end really is near, they say. Dec. 21, 2012, to be precise. That's the day the Mayan "long count" calendar ends, and as the calendar outlasted the civilization, there are no Mayan calendar guys around to tell us what that means.

That hasn't prevented a parade of self-declared Mayan calendar experts from speculating that the world will end on that day, just shy of a year from now. For example, the movie 2012 featured a killer solar flare, a biblical flood, a really bad script and wooden performances. Scary.

That's the glass half-empty crowd. The half-full gang, starring people like bestselling really bad writer William Gladstone, author of The Twelve, prefer the New Age interpretation. "Greed and materialism will have a lesser role in this new era. There will be a greater emphasis on harmony among all living beings."

If you use that Prophety voice, it sounds more convincing.

There's more. For the first time in 26,000 years the centre of the Milky Way (our home galaxy) and our sun will be in alignment. How cool is that? Not to mention the fact that Dec. 21 is the winter solstice and witchy stuff happens on the solstice.

Finally, that glyph of a Porky Pig-like character on the calendar, going what appears to be "Duh-beeya-duhbeeya-duhbeeya that's all, folks" in Mayan is somewhat troubling.

JOSHUA TRUJILLO/SEATTLEPI.COM/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Local atheists gathered at Dorky's Arcade in Tacoma, Wash., on May 21, 2011, the day that radio minister Harold Camping had predicted would be the beginning of the rapture.

Just kidding about the pig.

After extensive research (er, Google), I can authoritatively declare it's all a bunch of "zotz," which is Mayan for "bats," which is as close as I can get to "crazy."

The world will not end on Dec. 21 2012, say the usual humourless scientists from NASA, et cetera, any more than it will end on Dec. 31, 2011. Plus there's no way the Mayan astronomers could have known about that alignment of the sun and the galaxy thing. It's just a calendar, people. Get a life.

Before we go (but not for good!) let's raise a New Year's glass to Harold Camping, who, using his own zotz calendar, predicted the world would end on May 21, 2011, and when that didn't work, went all out for Oct. 21, 2011. That didn't work either, probably because he ignored the significance of the solstice, the equinox and reality in general.

Still, you never know. But to leave you on an upbeat note, John Cusack, the star of 2012, when asked what he would be doing on Dec. 21, 2012, replied: "Skiing."

Nothing zotz about him.

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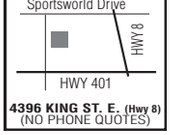

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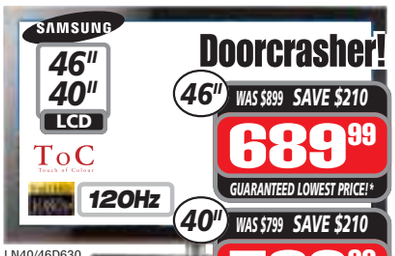

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▶ From left: Cillian Murphy in 28 Days Later; John Cusack in 2012.

Reel Guys

End of times in film

RICHARD CROUSE & MARK BRESLIN
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

- Hollywood loves a good apocalypse
- Here are some watchable worst-case scenarios

Richard: Mark, there are so many end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it movies out there it's hard to narrow it down, but I'll start our look at the end with Last Night. It's a dramedy about how people react in the hours before the destruction of the planet. My favourite part has David Cronenberg, in a rare appearance in front of the camera, as a utility company boss spending his final moments calling all his clients to offer thanks for their business.

Mark: Oh, Richard, I hated that movie. I found it twee and precious. Maybe I'm just an old-fashioned guy when it comes to the end of the world, but I want to see landmarks crumbling, a body count in the billions, explosions, tidal waves, and most importantly, a dad separated from his estranged wife and child who saves them, and his relationship. So, I liked 2012, even though I suspect the Mayans were numerically challenged. But I think it's important to differentiate between a natural apocalypse and one caused by alien invasion. Which do you – ahem – prefer?

RC: I'm more of a good old-fashioned apocalypse guy, although I'm also partial to super-plagues as well. At least on film. Omega Man, 28 Days Later and 12 Monkeys all have crazy viruses with the potential to wipe out mankind. One of the best epidemic movies is The Stand. It was made for TV, but doesn't skimp on the apocalyptica.

MB: Let me reverse my stand on my desire to see big special effects in these films. The Road is one of the scariest, most haunting movies about trying to survive an apocalypse I've ever seen. But then again, Independence Day has the White House blowin' up real good! I think there's an interesting double bill here, with two widely different takes on the topic.

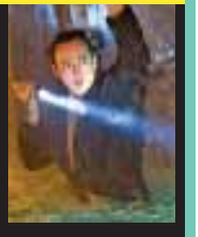
RC: I have to say that one of the best apocalyptic movies didn't have anything to do with aliens or killer planets but with a very simple idea — mass infertility. There's few special effects and the White House is probably still standing at the end. It's more about great storytelling and a thought provoking idea.

MB: Children of Men? Brilliant. But when I was a little boy I saw On the Beach, set in Australia after a nuclear holocaust. Not one special effect, but I cried myself to sleep for months.

Top three

- **Richard's Picks:**
  1. **On the Beach** A dystopian drama starring Gregory Peck that set the date for the end of the world just after World War III in 1964.
  2. **Panic in Year Zero!** Begins with one of filmdom's great understatements. "We've had it, haven't we dad?" as a mushroom cloud rises in the background.
  3. **Rock & Rule** is an animation set on a devastated planet where a rock star tries to rule the world.
- **Mark's Picks**
  1. **Miracle Mile** Real-time panic as our hero frantically searches for his girlfriend in L.A. before the bombs drop.
  2. **The Day After** Made for TV, a hyper-realistic look at Lawrence, Kansas after it's hit by a nuke.
  3. **I Am Legend** Will Smith is great in the Charlton Heston role in Omega Man.

Armageddon at the box office



Filmmakers seem just as obsessed with the end of the world as the ancient Mayans were. It almost seems Hollywood could make post-apocalyptic movies until the end of the world comes for real. This week the Reel Guys have a look at our world ceasing to exist.

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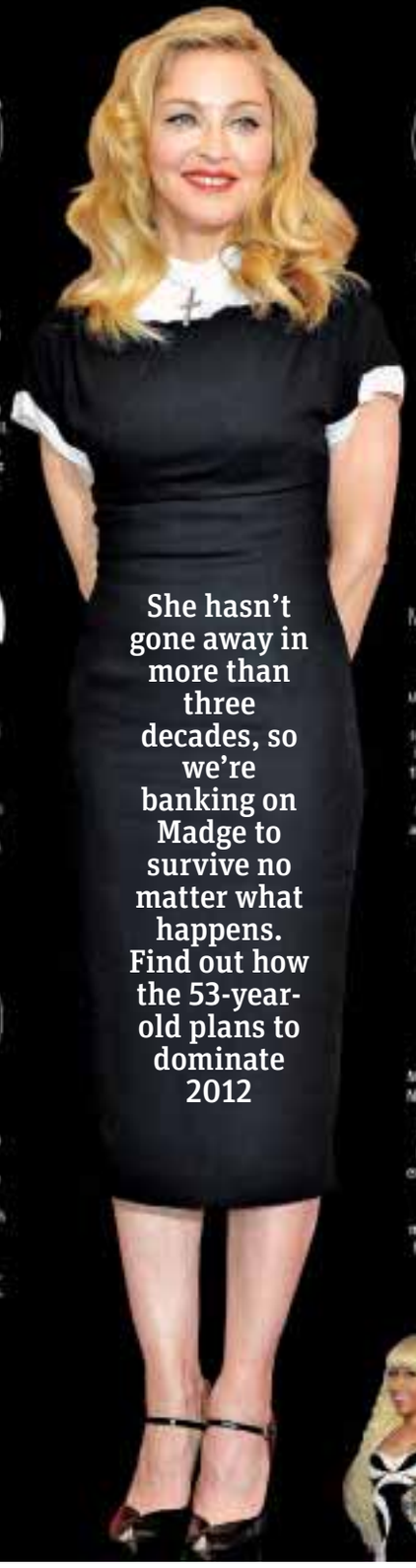

She hasn't gone away in more than three decades, so we're banking on Madge to survive no matter what happens. Find out how the 53-year-old plans to dominate 2012

20%

A NEW MOVIE

Screened at the Venice Film Festival, "W.E." follows a romantic researcher in the 1990s (Abbie Cornish) delving into the life of Wallis Simpson (Andrea Riseborough), the American divorcee who charmed King Edward VIII. We see both lives lived, though you may want to see none of it. Reviews have been mixed.

30%

A NEW ALBUM

Set for spring, the disc's first singles should be dropping soon. Will it be back to basics, or techno-infused, or or or...for a hint, she's hired some...

9%

NEW SCENT

Not does Madonna smell like? Find out: Her new "expression of me," a perfume called Truth or Dare, is due this year. The scent shares a name with her fashion line, which is still in stores.

30%

NEW GIG

In January, she headlines the halftime show at the Super Bowl, in a performance conceived by the always understated Cirque Du Soleil. Will core bias play to mainstream America?

1%

MADONNA-NESS

Somewhere—possibly hidden in the gap between her teeth, or underneath the Kabbalah bracelet—there lies a spirit animal (a Patronus, if you will) that ensures the Material Girl will live forever. The "actual" Madonna died 20 years ago, according to legend.

10%

NEW FRIENDS

To court younger fans, Madonna has hired rapper Nicki Minaj and Sri Lankan superstar M.I.A. on the track "Give Me All Your Love." Minaj, for one, is excited, tweeting: "OH MY Fmaggg Gahhhh!!!!! MADONNA jus kissed me!!!!! On the lips!!!!!! It felt soooo good. Soooo soft!!!! *passes out* aaahhhhh!!!!!!!!"

5 survival skills your mother didn't teach you

It's the end of days, you're alone and you're going to need a few skills to survive Here's what you need to know to cope with an apocalypse

ELISHA DACEY
METRO WINNIPEG

JENNA CUMBERS/METRO WINNIPEG

Bored during the apocalypse? Teach yourself to paint.

How to sew a button

Tools: needle, thread, scissors

Put the thread into the eye of the needle. Pull the thread through the needle until there is an equal length of thread on both sides. Tie the ends together in a big knot. Now position the button on the fabric. Push the needle up through the fabric, behind the button, and up through the button hole. Push the needle through a different hole in the button and pull the thread through. Repeat several times. On the backside, run the needle through your stitching several times to tie off the thread.

How to cut down a tree

Tools: chainsaw, rope, ladder

Use the ladder to tie a rope to the top of the tree, or as high as you can get it. Cut a notch (with the chainsaw, duh) that goes more than halfway through the tree, on the side of the tree you want it to fall on. Then cut downward on the other side, toward the notch you just created. When you get close to the notch, it should start to fall. If it doesn't, pull the rope. If it does start to fall, get out of the way, as the butt of the tree can kick back and smack you.

How to de-bone a fish

Tools: sharp knife, tweezers

Place clean fish on its side. Cut the fish just behind the gill plate until the blade hits the fish's backbone. Make sure your knife is flat and parallel to the cutting surface. Slice down the length of the backbone right to the tail. Repeat on the other side. Remove the backbone. Then slice between the rib bones into the meat of the fish and pull the bones out. Use tweezers to clasp onto the remaining bones and pull them out. Note: Do not later use these tweezers for your eyebrows.

How to start a fire using ice

Tools: foil, clear water, knife

Shape a piece of foil into a bowl. Fill it with about 5 cm of water. Wait for it to freeze. Make a nest of tinder for later. Using a pocket knife, shape the ice into a lens shape. (Remember, lenses are thicker in the middle and narrower around the edges.) Polish your lens with your bare hands (the heat will help the lens become nice and smooth). Angle the lens toward the sun and focus the light on the tinder nest. Be patient…. Fire!

How to be alone

Chances are, you're by yourself. How do you not go crazy until you find other people? Some suggestions: Write a story or some poetry. Learn something new, like guitar. There must be plenty of guitars and Guitar for Dummies books around. Read. There will be other books near the guitar book. Listen to music, assuming there's electricity. Sing, dance, paint, do puzzles. Keeping your mind occupied is key.

3 life

Winter storms

Here's what to do during a power outage:
- Turn off appliances to avoid a power surge when power is restored.
- Do not touch electrical wires, appliances or devices.
- Check for gas leaks and turn the valves off if you find one.
- Prepare an inventory of what has been lost or damaged.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Get creative with canned food

Whether you like buying in bulk or you're preparing for a disaster, you likely have a stash of canned goods Emily Richards explains how to turn those staples into easy, tasty meals

Makes 2 burgers.

DINNER EXPRESS

EMILY RICHARDS
FOOD@METRONEWS.CA

You can enjoy a snack of tuna salad and crackers, or you can create a tasty dinner for two.

With almost everything you need in the prepackaged tuna and crackers kit, you can make this meal when you're in a hurry.

Tip: If you have fresh bread and lettuce, make yourself a tuna burger in a bun or a salad to serve alongside.

Preparation:

1. Scrape tuna out of containers into bowl. Finely crush crackers and add to tuna. Stir in chili powder, oregano and cumin; shape into 2 patties.
2. In nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium high heat and brown tuna burgers for about 2 minutes turning once.

Ingredients:

- 2 pkgs (90 g each) snack-size tuna and crackers kit
- ½ tsp (2 mL) each chili powder and dried oregano leaves
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) ground cumin
- 1 tsp (5 mL) canola oil

EMILY RICHARDS IS A PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR & TV CELEBRITY CHEF. FOR MORE, VISIT EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA

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Warm up with this hearty potato corn chowder soup — made in minutes

If you happen to have some additional canned goods in your pantry, you can add smoked oysters, shrimp or even crab to the mix.

Preparation:

1. In soup pot, using potato masher, mash potatoes with garlic, parsley, thyme and cayenne until fairly smooth. Add creamed corn, milk, broth and water and bring to a gentle boil. Simmer for about 15 minutes to let flavours come together.

EMILY RICHARDS

Ingredients:

- 1 can (540 mL/19 oz) cooked diced potatoes, drained well
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 2 tsp (10 mL) dried parsley leaves
- 1 tsp (5 mL) dried thyme
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) cayenne
- 1 can (398 mL/14 oz) creamed corn
- 1 can (370 mL) 2% evaporated milk
- 1 can (284 mL/10 oz) vegetable broth
- 1 ¼ cups (300 mL) water

ALL PHOTOS BY EMILY RICHARDS

▶ Makes six 1 cup (250 mL) servings.

Drink of the week

Hot Chocolate Mix

Since this mix includes milk powder, all you have to do is add boiled water and enjoy!

- 1 cup (250 mL) instant skim milk powder
- ⅔ cup (150 mL) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (125 mL) unsweetened cocoa powder

In jar, stir together milk powder, sugar and cocoa powder until well combined. Store for up to 2 months.

When ready to make 1 mug of hot chocolate, bring about 1 cup (250 mL) of water to boil and whisk in 1/4 cup (60 mL) of the hot chocolate mix until smooth.

Tip: You can find instant skim milk powder at bulk and health food stores.

EMILY RICHARDS

Stovetop Fruit with Dumplings

▶ Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Ingredients:

- 1 can (796 mL/28 oz) mixed fruit with cherries in light syrup
- ¼ cup (60 mL) each dried cranberries and chopped dried apricots
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) rum
- ½ tsp (2 mL) ground cinnamon
- 1 ¼ cups (300 mL) biscuit mix
- ⅔ cup (150 mL) evaporated milk
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla extract

Preparation:

1. Pour fruit into small shallow saucepan and stir in cranberries, apricots, rum and cinnamon. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat.
2. In a bowl, stir biscuit mix with milk and vanilla until combined. Dollop 6 spoonfuls over top of fruit mixture; cover and cook for about 10 minutes or until biscuit is cooked through.

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3 SPORTS SIGNS OF APOCALYPSE

GIVING BACK

- Professional athletes realize just how overpaid they actually are and decide en masse to take a 50 per cent pay cut, which in turn sees ticket prices cut in half allowing middle class families to again cheer on home teams at arenas.

DROUGHT ENDS

- Toronto's famed Yonge Street is lined for miles with cheering fans as the city's beloved Maple Leafs do the unthinkable and win the Stanley Cup.

CFL OPENS A CAN

- The Canadian Football League, in an attempt to boost sluggish TV ratings and ticket sales, decides to have a one-round MMA fight between opposing players to determine who gets first possession in games. **PHILIP CROUCHER**

New level for a new era

Provided we're still here, sports could get a lot wackier beyond 2012

MICHAEL COHEN/GETTY IMAGES FILE

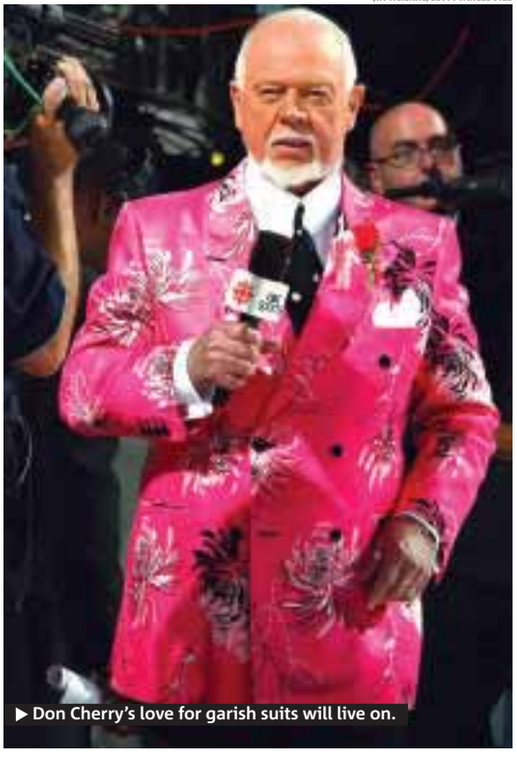
▶ UFC president Dana White

Ask anyone from a previous generation and they'll surely enlighten you as to how "sports ain't what they used to be." Until the end of 2012 those were just the crowings of the bewildered and beleaguered. Fans of the future, know *they* will have a valid claim…

2037: With ratings on the decline due to the influx of violent and gambling reality shows ("Monkey Knife Fight"; "Trillion Dollar Deficit Coin-Flip"; "Casino vs. Robosaurus"; "Who Has The Toughest Automatic Dishwasher…Literally?"), the now-completely hairless UFC president Dana White melds Mixed Martial Arts with Texas Hold 'Em: As Real A Semi-Bluff As It Gets!

2049: After locking out its players for a combined 15th time this century, many NBA and NFL players head back to college to finish their degrees (and to take advantage of the fact the NCAA is now paying its "amateur" athletes upwards of $2 million a semester, along with all-you-can-sit tattoos). The pros arrive to find the March Madness tournament has ballooned to 16388 schools (14 rounds plus two play-in games) and begins the previous June. Football still rebuffs a playoff system, making all but one of the 78 bowls utterly inane. (Though the

JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES FILE



▶ Don Cherry's love for garish suits will live on.

Visa Halftime Show sponsored by Doritos at the Meineke Car Care Bowl presented by Fannie Mae would have been great if it wasn't for all the commercials.)

2062: Pogs!

2087: Proving Darwin's theory correct, decades of relentless texting has led to the thumb being the strongest appendage on most humans. What started with Pro Thumb Wrestling ("It's totally fake!") evolves into the Thumb Olympics. Events include synchronized scrolling and the modern phalangeathalon. Most contestants aren't very polished.

2112: In an ongoing effort to reduce concussions, the NHL, which at last count had expanded to 78 teams, finally arrives at a "solution" to head shots by boiling the game down to a 99-shot per team shootout (with the provisos that no player can skate beyond the hashmarks for fear of running into the goalie and any shot above the waist results in a lifetime ban.) Coaches give themselves concussions from shaking their heads. Don Cherry's ghost, drawn back from the abyss every Saturday night with the promise of a new garish suit, calls Gary Bettman IV a joke. Of course, fighting is still allowed … how else to keep up with Ultimate Poker?

FRANK MICELOTTA/GETTY IMAGES FILE

▶ Thumb wars will be the sports battlefields of the future.

EDWARD FRASER FOR METRO

4 sports

Sports in brief

FOR THE LATEST SPORTS NEWS, INCLUDING THE TORONTO RAPTORS' BOXING DAY SEASON OPENER AGAINST THE CAVALIERS IN CLEVELAND, VISIT METRONEWS.CA.

Scan code for more sports.

Frontline NHLers for the future

If you could take a starting lineup from the NHL today into the new world, who would you take? Metro London managing editor Jim Reyno has narrowed down his starting six and likes his chances with his squad

JIM REYNO
@METRONEWS.CA

GETTY IMAGES FILE

▶ From left, Zdeno Chara, Erik Karlsson, Claude Giroux, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins, Milan Lucic and Marc-Andre Fleury.

My starting six NHLers to take into the new world are based on a number of factors: Statistics, age, leadership and what I call "winningness" — a combination of toughness, heart and ability to hoist Lord Stanley's cup.

Centre: In the absence of a healthy Sidney Crosby, I like Ryan Nugent-Hopkins. Not much of a track record in the NHL, but he's off to a great start in Edmonton and he carries himself like a veteran. Pretty impressive 18-year-old guy, on and off the ice.

Left wing: Milan Lucic. I don't care if he's dead last in the league in scoring and minus a million in the regular season — when it's crunch time, he crunches. Lucic is the quintessential power-forward. Fearless and intimidating at six-foot-four and 220 pounds, this 23-year-old would create space up front for Nugent-Hopkins and this next guy.

Right wing: Claude Giroux. This 23-year-old has improved every season in the NHL. He's quick, a heady passer, and still has a sniper's eye for the net. And although he hasn't won a cup yet, he's clutch: Giroux is among the league leaders in game-winning goals — not to mention points. Hopefully, we'll see Sid and Claude concussion-free soon — lighting it up for Canada on the same line at the next Olympics.

Defence: Zdeno Chara. Massive, in every sense of the word. Everyone knows about his booming slapshot and mean streak, but at six-foot-nine and 255 pounds he covers half the defensive zone just by standing there. Yes he's 34, but if Tony Bennett can have a No. 1 album at age 85, I can have Chara on my blue-line for a few years in the new world.

Defence: Erik Karlsson. With Big Z doing the heavy lifting defensively, the slick-passing, smooth-skating Karlsson would be free to roam. My transition game wouldn't stall with this guy: Karlsson moves the puck quickly and effectively. This 21-year-old Swede will be quarterbacking the Senators power play for years to come.

Goal: Tough one. Among the goaltending leaders, I either see guys approaching the ends of their careers or guys who haven't proven it over the long haul. Maybe Marc-Andre Fleury? Hitting his prime at age 27, already won a cup ... yeah, I'll go with Flower.

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Mayan Calendar Puzzle

Many are dreading 2012, as it supposedly means dark days are ahead as foretold by the Mayan calendar. Wrong! The truth is, it's just the end of a cycle of the Mayan calendar. To the Mayans, that was a time to celebrate. So, 2012 is more like a brand new day rather than an end of days. 2012 is going to be just fine.

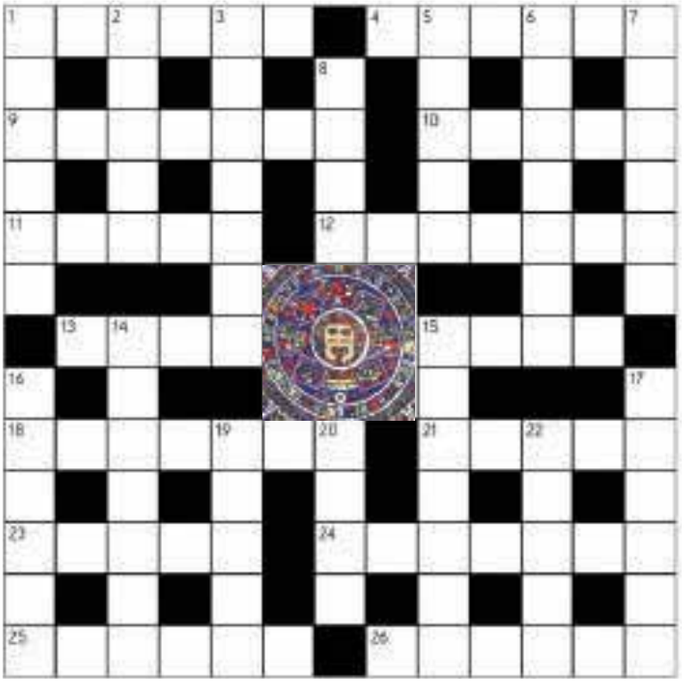
LARRY HUMBER

Across

1 The Mayan Calendar is known as the Maya ___ Round (a word meaning holy)
4 The Maya had ___ day names, nearly three times as many as we have
9 McHattie of Immortals and the disaster film 2012
10 What the Maya called day 19; it means rain storm (it's also a kind of canoe if you change the middle letter)
11 If things go as some say in 2012, we'll be needing more than ___ salts to cure our ills
12 Predominantly Muslim nation in West Africa
13 A New Testament book
15 Scarlett O'Hara's home
18 Shake violently
21 Basketball's "Shaq"
23 Information fed into a computer
24 Adopts: 2 wds.
25 John ___ played writer Jackson Curtis in 2012
26 ___ & Demons was a Dan Brown book and later a film starring Tom Hanks

Down

1 In the film 2012, Lilly is the ___ of Noah (they're Curtis's kids)
2 Maia Chiburdanidze was women's world ___ champ
3 Digs up or brings to light
5 Rouse from sleep
6 One who's into astrology, say: 2 wds.
7 Country folk
8 Terminates
14 The Mayan calendar is used to this day in this part of Mexico (it's an anagram of APHASIC)
15 The Mayan calendar is known to scholars as the ___ (the answer is close in spelling to The Lord of the Rings author)
16 Crazy person
17 Symbolic figures as found in the Mayan calendar
19 The ___ calendar was an adaptation of the Mayan
20 Erodes, ___ away
22 Come as a result



Solution

ACROSS
1. SACRED, 4. TWENTY, 9. STEPHEN, 10. KAWAK, 11. EPSOM, 12. SENEGAL, 13. ACTS, 15. TARA, 18. AGITATE, 21. O'NEAL, 23. INPUT, 24. TAKES UP, 25. CUSACK and 26. ANGELS
DOWN
1. SISTER, 2. CHESS, 3. EXHUMES, 5. WAKEN, 6. NEW AGER, 7. YOKELS, 8. ENDS, 14. CHIAPAS, 15. TZOLKIN, 16. MANIAC, 17. GLYPHS, 19. AZTEC, 20. EATS and 22. ENSUE

NOTE: The solutions for the Dec. 24th crossword and Sudoku will appear in the Jan. 3 issue of Metro. If you can't wait until then, go to metronews.ca for the answers.

Numerology

Numerology offers a personality and lifestyle profile that can help unlock the mysteries of the past, present and future. Numbers help predict outcomes — so you can enhance relationships, career and overall living!

Number One

Celebrate: You will inspire people willing to hear your point of view. Not only will they be impressed with your vision, but they will tell others about you.
Watch out for: Not just one, but many people will confront you with matters of the heart. If you are not interested, then be honest.

Number Two

Celebrate: Aggressive folks who have rattled your chain in the past will ask you for forgiveness. Your career will pick up tenfold, so be ready to take on new responsibilities and exciting experiences.
Watch out for: Try not to push things. If it does not fit, do not force it. Relax and let things go.

Number Three

Celebrate: You have done things for people that others would not think of doing. This year coworkers, friends and family will show their gratitude for your kindness.
Watch out for: Your loyalty will be questioned two times in 2012; however, as long as you remain calm and cool, your maturity will shine through.

Number Four

Celebrate : Folks will come to you throughout the year. They will use you as a distraction from their woes. Do not shun them. Make money from it, or least earn good karma.
Watch out for: All will be merry for the first part of the year, but in mid-2012 you need to be watchful of people who say they love you, but hurt you most.

Number Five

Celebrate: Your creative side will bubble over in 2012. Business, career, love and spiritual ideas you have been putting off will now ignite and you will soar to new heights.
Watch out for: People with good intentions will try to persuade you not to take a chance. Hear their advice, but ultimately listen to your heart and go with your intuition.

How it works

- It starts with your birth date — month, day, year.
- Break down your numbers to a single digit.
- For example, say you were born on Dec. 20, 1971. December is the 12th month, so break the month down: 1+2 = 3
- The 20th day — break it down: 2+0 = 2
- The year 1971 — break it down: 1+9+7+1 = 18. Break it down again to a single digit: 1+8 = 9
- Now add up all three final numbers: 3+2+9 = 14
- Break 14 down and your final answer is 1+4 = 5
- You are a number 5

Number Six

Celebrate: In 2012 smiling and laughing will have more of an affect on your life than you could ever imagine. Folks may test you many times and in many ways, but you will pass them all.
Watch out for: Taking things personally will only cause stress. When others try to dish discomfort, deflect it by saying to yourself: "I am peaceful, and peace is with me."

Number Seven

Celebrate: Say what is on your mind, and do not hesitate to do what you feel. As long as it does not hurt anybody, do as you like and live how you want.
Watch out for: Acquaintances may judge you incorrectly. But do not worry, because in the first quarter of 2012 they will learn to appreciate your character and cherish your friendship.

Number Eight

Celebrate: Somebody between the ages of 21 and 35 will praise your name, and if they do this at work, your income will increase sooner rather than later.
Watch out for: Do not answer any questions that will turn into deeper questions. Getting into the nitty gritty of things is not necessary.

Number Nine

Celebrate: If somebody owes you money, you can look forward to getting some of it back, and just when you need it most.
Watch out for: Focus on your health, especially if you do not have the best of health right now.

A SYNDICATED ASTROLOGIST, CERISE FAIRFAX IS PUBLISHED IN VARIOUS NEWSPAPERS AND ONLINE COMMUNITIES. SHE IS ALSO A LIFE COACH COUNSELOR. CHECK HER OUT AT CERISEFAIRFAX.COM

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